Opinion

Guest Voices



Brian Terrell, who lives on a Catholic Worker farm in Maloy, Iowa, and Martha Hennessy, granddaughter of Catholic Worker co-founder Dorothy Day, carry a banner in New York City during a march to abolish nuclear weapons Nov. 28, 2023. (OSV News/Gregory A. Shemitz)



by John Dear

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November 23, 2026

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On this week's episode of "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," I speak with Brian Terrell, a lifelong Catholic Worker and dedicated peace activist. In 1975, Brian joined the Catholic Worker and helped Dorothy Day as associate editor for the newspaper; then in 1979, he joined the Davenport, Iowa Catholic Worker. Since 1986, he and his wife, Betsy, have run the Catholic Worker farm in Maloy, Iowa.

He's also worked nonstop for justice and disarmament around the country and beyond, been arrested over 200 times and spent more than 2 years total in jails and prisons.

"I met Dorothy Day the day I arrived at the New York Catholic Worker in 1975. I was 19, and she immediately started asking me about myself, and my thoughts on a whole range of big issues. I was amazed," Brian said. "A few years later, when I was in prison for the protest at Rocky Flats [nuclear weapons plant in Colorado], she sent me a beautiful card offering her prayers and support."

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In the early 1980s, Brian was organizing against the threat of nuclear war under President Ronald Reagan, and joining demonstrations across the U.S. and Europe. "I think those massive peace protests in the 1980s saved the world. Thousands of people rose up, and we have to do it again."

"Peacemaking is at the center of our faith," he said. "It's what it's all about. We have hope and peace in our hearts, but not by ignoring the realities of the world. Optimism is despair in its most dangerous form. The stakes are so high that we need to recognize that everything we do, however small, is significant."

Listen to the full episode here.

This story appears in the **The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast** feature series. View the full series.